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Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8387th meeting

Wednesday, 31 October 2018, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Llorentty Soliz	(Bolivia (Plurinational State of))
Members:	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Adom
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Mr. Amde
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Mr. Lewicki
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Clay
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

The situation concerning Western Sahara

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara (S/2018/889)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Western Sahara

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara (S/2018/889)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2018/970, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United States of America.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/889, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

China, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, France, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Ethiopia, Russian Federation

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The draft resolution received 12 votes in favour, none against and three abstentions. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 2440 (2018).

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the voting.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): As the United States said in April (see S/PV.8246), we have embarked on a new approach to the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

First, there can be no more business as usual on Western Sahara. Secondly, we must lend our full support to the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Mr. Köhler, in his efforts to achieve a just, lasting and mutually acceptable solution that will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. We are encouraged by the progress made in the past six months. We welcome Personal Envoy Köhler's decision to restart a direct negotiation process, beginning with a round table in Geneva. We are pleased that Morocco, the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro, Algeria and Mauritania have all accepted Personal Envoy Köhler's invitation in good faith and without preconditions. We urge that they engage constructively with the Personal Envoy throughout the duration of the process in order to realize a realistic, practicable and enduring political solution. However, we caution against any notion that we have crossed a finish line. The political process is only beginning.

We believe that direct negotiations under United Nations leadership offer a real opportunity to achieve a mutually acceptable solution, and the upcoming meeting in Geneva will be a critical first step in the process. The parties must remain committed to negotiations at the December round table and throughout to a successful conclusion. The meeting in December is not a one-off event. It must be the beginning of a process of direct negotiations. We fully support Personal Envoy Köhler and believe that the Security Council should do everything it can to ensure that he can actively lead and advance the political process, while building on the momentum we hope Geneva will generate, in order to achieve a long-overdue political solution. The United States further calls on the parties to respect their relevant obligations and assurances and refrain from any actions that could undermine United Nations-facilitated negotiations or further destabilize the situation in Western Sahara.

We express our gratitude to and full support for Personal Envoy Köhler and his team. We welcome the Personal Envoy to the Security Council at any time to brief it on the status of his efforts. We also express thanks to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Colin Stewart, and all those working tirelessly as part of MINURSO. We

thank the Government of Switzerland for hosting the upcoming talks.

There are those among us who would have preferred a 12-month mandate. However, the political process now beginning under the Personal Envoy's leadership requires the Security Council's close attention and support. Shortening MINURSO's mandate to end in April 2019 signals that the Council is determined to accelerate the political process and move beyond the status quo. Renewing MINURSO's mandate for only six months reflects our continuing resolve to see the negotiations proceed swiftly, in good faith and without preconditions. It also makes clear that the Security Council will not let Western Sahara and MINURSO slip into the shadows.

As the political process resumes, the United States will carefully evaluate the MINURSO mandate going forward. Further renewals will not be automatic and will hinge on whether or not MINURSO is contributing to a political solution. With the launch of a political process, we have started to rectify one of the key challenges to MINURSO, which is making sure that the peacekeeping Mission supports a political solution. That change was pivotal to our decision to continue extending the mandate of the peacekeeping Mission. As we said in April, the United States will continue to stand by the core principle that peacekeeping missions must support political solutions, and we will assess MINURSO's future performance accordingly. The United States will continue doing everything possible to support Personal Envoy Köhler and to advance negotiations.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank the American penholder for its in-depth consultations and efforts to take all views on board in drafting the text. I will focus on three issues.

First, France welcomes the adoption of resolution 2440 (2018), which renews the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). The consultations held on 11 October with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Colin Stewart, emphasized the key role played by MINURSO to maintain calm and preserve the ceasefire in the area. As underscored in the Secretary-General's report (S/2018/889), the force plays an indispensable preventive role in maintaining regional stability. That essential point was also highlighted by the independent assessment.

I would like to pay tribute to the Special Representative and his teams who, through their presence, are mitigating tensions and helping to reduce the risk of escalation. On the basis of these elements, France reiterates its commitment to a stable mandate of 12 months. The six-month renewal contained in resolution 2440 (2018), which we have just adopted, must remain exceptional, as it is our responsibility not to disrupt the management and planning of the Mission's resources. This is as true for MINURSO as it is for the other operations mandated by the Council. The shortening of mandates seems to be a false good idea that has no real effect on the political process but could weaken the United Nations system. Maintaining an annual framework is important to ensuring the stability of peacekeeping operations.

It is the calm on the ground that MINURSO has achieved that makes progress in the political sphere possible. We therefore welcome the absence of a major threat to the ceasefire, as acknowledged in the resolution, and the improved situation on the ground since our last renewal. The Council sent clear messages in April (see S/PV.8246) that have borne fruit. Our role is to be vigilant in recalling that the ceasefire must continue to be fully respected.

Finally, in the context of a more peaceful atmosphere, the Council fully supports the efforts of the Personal Envoy in the political process, which is also illustrated by the text adopted today. Following the success of his visit to the region in late June and early July, the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Mr. Horst Köhler, laid the groundwork for bringing Morocco, the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro, Algeria and Mauritania together at a preliminary round of talks in early December in Geneva. The resolution also welcomes the positive response of these four actors to the invitation to participate in this discussion.

To that end, it will be very useful for the Personal Envoy to continue his advance consultations so as to better prepare this exercise. We encourage the participants to play a constructive role therein, and recall that, for France, the autonomy plan proposed by Morocco constitutes a serious basis for future discussions. I welcome the fact that the Security Council is lending its full support to the dynamic I have just recalled.

Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni (Sweden): Sweden voted in favour of resolution 2440 (2018) today, as it extends the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), and expresses full support for the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, as well as for the resumption of the negotiating process, beginning with the round table meeting in Geneva later this year.

When Sweden entered the Council as an elected member almost two years ago, it was in the firm conviction that the United Nations-led political process — dormant for almost a decade — needed to be revived. However, this was far from given. The Council was faced with a dangerous stand-off in Guerguerat that threatened the ceasefire and could have led to renewed hostilities. MINURSO was hampered in carrying out its mandate as its full functionality had not been restored and the level of trust between the parties and the United Nations was at a low. I think everyone in the Chamber recognizes that we have come a long way since.

A new Secretary-General decided to directly engage with the parties, paving the way for the restoration of the full functionality of MINURSO and eventually a solution to the Guerguerat crisis. The Secretary-General's ambition to relaunch the United Nations-led political process with a new dynamic and spirit led to the appointment of Horst Köhler as his Personal Envoy. We pay tribute to his tremendous efforts and his personal dedication. Following the Personal Envoy's consultations with the parties and neighbouring States over the past year, he is now finalizing preparations for a round table meeting in December. We welcome the positive response from all those invited as a positive sign of a renewed commitment to the United Nations-led political process.

As a member of the Council, our ambition was to contribute to breaking the deadlock on the question of Western Sahara and moving beyond the status quo. It is in this spirit that we have worked in support of the United Nations, MINURSO and Personal Envoy Köhler. We have tried to bring more attention to the humanitarian situation and the insufficient funding for Sahrawi refugees. We have advocated for the full inclusion of women and youth in the political process, and we have encouraged enhanced cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, including for conflict visits to the region.

Resolution 2351 (2017) turned the page following a year of many challenges. Resolution 2414 (2018) paved the way for a resumed United Nations-led political process, and resolution 2440 (2018) sustains the positive momentum towards advancing direct negotiations. MINURSO has our unwavering support, as it upholds the ceasefire and serves as a conflict prevention tool. It also plays a key role in supporting a United Nations-led political process that is finally under way. While a strong and effective Mission remains essential, our shared goal must be to ultimately make MINURSO obsolete by reaching a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. This ultimate aim remains as valid as ever.

Finally, we want to commend the United States for its extraordinary leadership on Western Sahara. This is a question that has suffered from a lack of attention and political will for far too long. That clearly is no longer the case. There is now a real opportunity to find a sustainable political solution and resolve one of the most long-standing disputes on the agenda of the United Nations. This must be seized to end the plight of the people of Western Sahara and to realize their legitimate aspirations.

We urge the parties and neighbouring States to continue to constructively engage with the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy without preconditions and in good faith as they prepare for direct talks in Geneva and beyond.

Mr. Clay (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom was pleased to vote in favour today of resolution 2440 (2018), which supports the work of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Mr. Horst Köhler, and rightly focuses on progress that must be made towards a lasting and mutually acceptable solution that will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

The United Kingdom strongly supports the efforts of Mr. Köhler, as well as the work of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and its Head, Mr. Colin Stewart. We are very grateful to our United States colleagues for their efforts to ensure that the resolution sends a signal of the Council's strong support for political progress, while underpinning the important work of MINURSO.

The United Kingdom looks forward to the round table talks in December, which will mark the start

of a process, and encourages all concerned to work constructively with the Personal Envoy in the spirit of compromise through the duration of the process to ensure a successful outcome.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation welcomes and supports the initiative of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Mr. Horst Köhler, to convene negotiations in Geneva in December between the parties to the Western Sahara settlement, with the participation of neighbouring countries. We urge all those invited to join the dialogue without preconditions and with the aim of achieving a mutually acceptable solution. It is in that spirit that we are working with all parties concerned, with whom we enjoy relationships of trust.

The international community, including the Security Council, must contribute to the success of the process initiated by Mr. Köhler, which creates a unique chance to make progress on the Western Sahara settlement. Our collective efforts should be based on the parameters previously agreed by the Security Council, which, in accordance with relevant Council resolutions, identify the parties to the Western Sahara conflict; are based on the fundamental principle of a mutually acceptable definitive solution; and stipulate the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in the framework of procedures consistent with the principles and the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

To that end, a mutually acceptable formula is the main precondition for the sustainable nature of any settlement. There has always been a firm consensus in the Security Council on this issue. Unfortunately, in the adoption of resolution 2440 (2018) today, we see yet another attempt to amplify the ambiguity of the aforementioned parameters. We believe that this approach is unacceptable.

Attempts to revise the agreed bases of the Western Saharan settlement have become the main reason that we were unable to support the American text. We did not block the resolution because it extends the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), which is important for regional stability. We support and assist MINURSO, including by deploying Russian military observers to its contingent, but a vote in favour of the resolution would have meant sacrificing our principled position in support of the existing bases of the settlement.

Furthermore, we have to note that, as was the case for resolution 2414 (2018), the process of preparing and agreeing today's decision was once again neither transparent nor consultative. The principled and well-founded comments of a number of Council members were not taken into account. That shortcoming must be remedied. We once again conclude that the institution of informal penholdership on specific subjects in the Security Council leaves serious room for improvement.

We encourage all to unite in supporting the mission of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Mr. Horst Köhler, and help launch a comprehensive negotiation process under his auspices. Such a constructive approach would be of key significance, not only for the settlement in Western Sahara, but in order to improve the situation in the region as a whole and enhance the efforts of all players with the aim of overcoming the challenges to stability and security.

Mr. Amde (Ethiopia): We wish to thank our colleagues from the United States for their serious efforts to ensure a consensus on resolution 2440 (2018). We also appreciate their efforts in preparing the resolution.

The developments that have unfolded in recent months surrounding the issue of Western Sahara have shown all of us that there is undeniable progress that needs the Council's full support. We trust that the efforts made by the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General on the Western Sahara to relaunch the broadly advocated peace process will start seeing results with the convening of preliminary round-table talks in December in Geneva. It is also vital that the Council continue to speak with one voice in support of the Personal Envoy's efforts at this critical moment in the peace process.

In that context, we would have liked to vote in favour of the text proposed by the United States. Unforunately, the points we raised during the negotiations on the draft, which we believed were fundamental principles for finding a political solution, were not taken into consideration. It is Ethiopia's consistent position that a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which must also have the ultimate objective of securing the right to self-determination for the people of Western Sahara in the framework of arrangements consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the

United Nations, is the only viable option for resolving the issue of Western Sahara.

While we are looking forward to positive progress at the Geneva talks in December, we reiterate our firm conviction that any meaningful progress in the peace process still hinges on respect for that fundamental principle. Commitment to that principle and the full cooperation of the two parties with the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General is absolutely essential. That is why it is vital that the Council encourage the parties to continue their constructive engagement, demonstrate the necessary political will and fully commit themselves to the political process. We look forward to a positive outcome to the Geneva peace talks in December.

Mr. Adom (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the adoption of resolution 2440 (2018), renewing the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 30 April 2019. However, we would have preferred for the mandate to have been renewed for one year in order to enable MINURSO to work towards the long term. My country believes that six months do not sufficiently match our shared goal of helping to build a dynamic of peaceful coexistence in the region.

In that regard, I take this opportunity to commend the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy for Western Sahara for their initiative, which has led to the organization of talks on the basis of direct dialogue among all parties.

The resolution that we have just adopted clearly defines the framework and objectives of the mandate accorded by the Security Council to the Secretary-General to enable him to make concrete progress, through negotiations, towards ending the political deadlock in the dispute over Western Sahara, which has lasted too long. That necessarily requires the renewed and determined commitment of stakeholders to taking ownership of the political process. In that regard, Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the decision of the stakeholders and neighbouring States to take part in a round table, to be held in Geneva on 5 and 6 December at the initiative of the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy.

We also welcome the serious and credible efforts of the Kingdom of Morocco to work towards a final dispute settlement. The Moroccan autonomy initiative constitutes a good basis for discussion, as does the commitment of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, whom we strongly encourage to continue to work for the promotion of a framework for dialogue that could lead to peace in Western Sahara.

We also note that, in accordance with resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2250 (2015), and as sought by the Council, the involvement of women and young people in the talks is crucial.

The Council has reaffirmed MINURSO's central role, particularly with regard to respect for the ceasefire and pre-existing agreements and the maintenance of security throughout the region. Ultimately, Côte d'Ivoire hopes that, on the basis of the terms of the new resolution, frank negotiations will begin among the parties, who must be willing to compromise with a view to reaching a final settlement of the dispute.

In conclusion, I reaffirm my country's faith in the success of those initiatives, which will ultimately lead to the development of the Arab Maghreb Union and, above all, to the happiness of the people of the region.

Mr. Lewicki (Poland): Poland voted in favour of resolution 2440 (2018) and regrets that the Council was unable to reach consensus on it. We supported the resolution because we believe that it is the Security Council's responsibility to assist the parties in achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution to this long-standing dispute, based on compromise and in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Poland appreciates the important role played by the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) on the ground and the need for it to fully implement its mandate, including its role in helping the Personal Envoy reach a mutually acceptable political solution. We believe that the resolution adopted today by the Security Council is an important step in advancing that process. In that context, we welcome the extension of MINURSO's mandate for another six months. We also wish to thank the United States as penholder for its efforts during the negotiations.

In conclusion, let me assure you, Mr. President, of Poland's continued support for the mission of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Horst Köhler.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): We voted in favour of resolution 2440 (2018) and we thank the United States, as penholder, for the facilitation of the resolution. The fact that the resolution could not count on the unanimous support of the Council should not, in

our opinion, distract us from what we believe is truly important, namely, the relaunching of the political process. That is something that — having listened to my colleagues who have already spoken — I believe all of us on the Council strongly support, because the relaunching of the political process is in the interests of the people, the parties involved and the wider region.

Our common ambition must therefore be to arrive at a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in the context of arrangements that are consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, we reiterate our full support and appreciation for the efforts of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara and former President of Germany, Mr. Horst Köhler.

Significant steps have been taken since the last renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) in April. In that regard, we welcome the Personal Envoy's initiative to host a round table in Geneva in December. We commend Morocco, the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro, Algeria and Mauritania for their positive and prompt responses. We stress the importance of their continued constructive engagement with the Personal Envoy with the aim of resuming direct negotiations in good faith and without preconditions. We must now capitalize on the existing momentum to relaunch the political process, for which the continued engagement of the Council is indispensable. We also recognize the importance of the work of MINURSO in maintaining stability on the ground and creating the conditions for political progress to take place. We express our full support for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Mr. Colin Stewart, and for the women and men serving in MINURSO under very challenging conditions.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We wish to express our satisfaction at the adoption of resolution 2440 (2018), renewing the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara. We voted in favour of the resolution, as we consider it necessary to support the political process aimed at resolving the issue of Western Sahara and to meet the humanitarian needs of the Sahrawi people. In that regard, we consider it urgent to resume the political process, under the auspices of the United Nations and the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Mr. Horst Köhler, without preconditions and in good faith. We reiterate our full support in that regard.

We hope that a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution can be achieved between the parties on the basis of international law and the relevant resolutions of the Council, leading to the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. In that regard, we look forward to the holding of the round table in Geneva on 5 and 6 December, and encourage the participants to take advantage of that important opportunity to move towards a solution to this long-standing question.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) has earnestly fulfilled the mandate of the Security Council and made positive efforts to maintain regional stability. China supports the renewal of MINURSO's mandate so that it can continue to play a constructive role in properly resolving the issue of Western Sahara. We hope that, with respect to future draft resolutions, there will be full consultations that allow us to reach consensus. China appreciates the good offices of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Mr. Horst Köhler, and commends his initiative to convene a round table in Geneva. We hope that, with the joint efforts of all stakeholders, that round table will successfully take place and lay the concrete foundations for advancing the political process.

Through the adoption today of resolution 2440 (2018), the Council has extended the MINURSO mandate for six months. We express our full support for the initiative of the Personal Envoy, demonstrating his determination to uphold the mandate of the Mission in order to achieve a political solution to the issue. China's position on the issue of Western Sahara has been consistent. We will maintain an impartial and objective position in support of the work of the United Nations in promoting a political settlement, and encourage the parties to seek a just, lasting and mutually acceptable solution on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions and through negotiations.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): Kuwait voted in favour of resolution 2440 (2018), extending the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 30 April 2019. We had hoped for the mandate to be

extended for a full year, in line with the recommendation of the Secretary-General.

We stress the importance of the role undertaken by MINURSO and the complete fulfilment of its mandate. We also express our support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, Mr. Horst Köhler, to implement the Security Council's resolutions with a view to achieving a just, lasting, practical and realistic political solution acceptable by both sides. We support the upcoming negotiations called for by the Personal Envoy, to be held in Geneva on 5 and 6 December. We welcome the acceptance by all relevant parties of the invitation to participate in the round-table meeting without preconditions and in good faith.

We renew our full support for the Moroccan initiative pertaining to the autonomy of Western Sahara, which represents a constructive choice aimed at achieving a solution acceptable to all parties. We underscore the need to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Morocco. We also welcome Morocco's credible and serious measures and initiatives, as well as its positive interaction with the special procedures of the Human Rights Council.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, allow me to express my gratitude to the United States for its efforts to ensure the adoption of resolution 2440 (2018), as well as to the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Mr. Horst Köhler, and all of the personnel of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) for their hard work. We wish them every success in meeting the ongoing challenges of the period that begins today.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea voted in favour of the resolution just adopted on the renewal of MINURSO's mandate because we believe it important that the parties continue to receive the support, vigilance and facilitation of the United Nations in reaching a just and lasting political solution that is mutually acceptable to the parties to the dispute. We therefore urge the international community to support the efforts of the parties and encourage them to find a definitive solution. We also urge the parties to the conflict to facilitate the work of the United Nations, above all that of the Personal Envoy, to achieve a lasting peace and put an end this long-standing conflict.

It is necessary for transparency and the spirit of permanent consultation to prevail throughout the process so that all parties, including the members of the Council and the parties involved, be kept up to date on the process. That should result in a climate of trust and facilitate decision-making on the matter at hand.

Finally, we commend the full readiness of the parties to the conflict to participate in December's round table. We are hopeful and optimistic with regard to the meetings, while acknowledging that the Kingdom of Morocco has added a number of helpful ingredients that could greatly facilitate the achievement of a constructive solution during the negotiations. Meanwhile, we call on all the parties to refrain from any action that could undermine the prevailing environment of calm in the region.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

My delegation abstained in the voting on resolution 2440 (2018) because the issue of the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara — which is one of the central questions in the resolutions extending the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) — is not sufficiently reflected in the final text. The Security Council must not subordinate the issue of the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara when addressing this matter.

We also call attention to the surprising inclusion by the penholder of new elements in the text adopted today that were not included in the text negotiated only days ago. Bolivia believes that meetings held to negotiate the text of any draft resolution must above all deal with the issues contained therein. The subsequent inclusion of other elements naturally creates touches on the sensitivities of the members.

Bolivia fully believes that the work assigned by the Secretary-General to his Personal Envoy for Western Sahara and that of MINURSO require the full support of the Security Council in order to achieve a political solution between the parties. We therefore express our full support for the relaunch by the Personal Envoy of the negotiating process with a new dynamic and a spirit in line with the directives of the Security Council so as to reach a just, lasting and mutually acceptable solution to the situation in Western Sahara. We reaffirm our confidence that, through this negotiation

process among the parties and neighbouring countries, a political solution can be achieved, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

As this is the last scheduled meeting of the Council for the month of October, before adjourning this meeting, I wish to express the sincere appreciation of the delegation of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to the members of the Council, in particular my colleagues the Permanent Representatives, their respective staffs and the Security Council Affairs Division for all the support that they have provided us. Undeniably, it has been a busy month during which we have rallied to consensus on several important issues within our purview. We could not have done so alone without the hard work, support and positive contributions of every delegation and the representatives of the Secretariat, including, of course, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the interpreters, the translators, the Verbatim Reporters and the security personnel. As we end our presidency, I know that I speak on behalf of the Council in wishing the delegation of China good luck for the month of November.

The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.